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➤BOOK : NOTICES.◀

MEDIA, BABYLONIA AND PERSIA.*

In this volume Madame Ragozin continues the narrative of the history which, closing with the fall of Nineveh, she told in "The Story of Assyria." It is now carried down to the closing years of Dareios I. A full exposition is also given of the Zend-avesta or religion of Zoroaster. The epoch of Cyrus is full of interest, not only in itself, but by reason of the relation of that monarch to the Jewish people. The whole subject is clearly treated and the material furnished is quite accurate. Of course, in a sphere of study in which the materials are continually being increased and new light constantly being shed upon the situation, it is difficult to write anything which will remain for any reasonable time authoritative and satisfactory. Students of the subject will note that Tiele, the great authority in this department, in his "Babylonian-Assyrian History" takes a different view of some transactions, e. g. the relations of Necho to Josiah. It is also to be observed that the facts recently brought to light fail to sustain the position here maintained that there was a great banking house of Egibi in Babylon. Madame Ragozin's style is spirited and clear; with the abundant and well-selected illustrations, over seventy in number, this volume contains the best attainable popular account of the history and life of Media, Babylon and Persia.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.†

In a "prefatory note" the writer of this volume tells us that the Provost and Deans of the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania requested him to deliver before the students "a series of Sunday Afternoon Addresses upon Religious Topics." The request was acceded to, the Ten Commandments were chosen as the theme and the present volume contains the lectures which were then delivered. Regarding the Commandments as "the foundation stones of authoritative morality or true society," the author has made his book a kind of treatise upon individual and social ethics. But throughout the treatment of the subject a continuous stream of apposite illustration and quotation has banished any suspicion of dullness. The well-known brilliant style, weighed down, sometimes, with excess of ornament, which characterizes all the works of Dr. Boardman, is not out of place in dealing with these weighty themes. The pages abound in quotable passages. Common sense in interpretation and fearlessness in application are joined

* THE STORY OF MEDIA, BABYLONIA AND PERSIA, FROM THE FALL OF NINEVEH TO THE PERSIAN WAR. By Zenaide A. Ragozin. New York: *G. P. Putnam's Sons*. 1888. Price \$1.50.

† THE TEN COMMANDMENTS: A course of Lectures delivered before the University of Pennsylvania. By George Dana Boardman. Philadelphia: *The American Baptist Publication Society*. Price, \$1.25.

with a beauty of form and address that carries the truth home. As to the standpoint of interpretation adopted, the Commandments are regarded as Jewish in form and letter, but universal in spirit. Hence the fourth is not "taken as though it settles for all men and all time the questions of the origin, the basis, or the authority of the Sabbath." The remarks on the fifth commandment are especially interesting and timely, though perhaps too much is made of the word "honor" as distinguished from "obey." In the discussion of the seventh command, the account of the creation of woman and the first bridal is taken as a "divine parable," not as literal truth. Here again the tendency to find in the Scripture more than it fairly contains is apparent. The old derivation of "Ishah," "man-ess" from "ish" "man," is accepted. Still, in spite of these minor defects, the book is excellent. It strikes a true note. It teaches many wise lessons that the age needs. It is a shining model of that style of ethical preaching which is coming into vogue and which is bound to enter more and more into the staple of the sermons of the future. Everywhere one feels not only the wisdom and insight of the teacher of morals, but also the earnestness and power of the preacher of Jesus Christ.

BIBLICAL ANTIQUITIES.*

Professor Bissell has performed an excellent service in providing this popular manual of Biblical Antiquities for students of Scripture. The whole field is covered in sixteen chapters divided under three heads, entitled, Domestic Antiquities, Civil Antiquities, Sacred Antiquities. Any intelligent church-member would find it both an interesting occupation and a profitable task to read this book through from beginning to end, while the material furnished is of such a character as to make the book useful for purposes of reference to every one who studies the Bible. We do not vouch for all the statements made; some are surely inaccurate and will be corrected in future editions; the views of biblical criticism are not always satisfactory; but taken as a whole we heartily recommend the book as a scholarly and popular survey of biblical antiquities which few men could have done as well as Professor Bissell.

FUTURE PUNISHMENT.†

The writer of this volume asserts that the church doctrine of future punishment is wholly drawn from the New Testament, and that the Old Testament has been consulted only to find what support it could give to this already formulated doctrine. He believes that this is a wrong method—that we should first inquire what the Old Testament prophets believed on this great question, since Jesus himself placed his divine seal upon their teaching. This teaching of the Old

* BIBLICAL ANTIQUITIES: A Hand-book for use in Seminaries, Sabbath-schools, Families and by all Students of the Bible. By Edwin Cone Bissell, D. D., Professor in Hartford Theol. Seminary. Philadelphia: *The American Sunday-School Union*. 1888

† THE FIRE OF GOD'S ANGER, OR LIGHT FROM THE O. T. UPON THE N. T. TEACHING CONCERNING FUTURE PUNISHMENT. By L. C. BAKER. Published at office of "Words of Reconciliation," Philadelphia, Pa. Price, 75 cents; by mail, 80 cents.